

European unification in 1951 and in 1993

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EUROPEAN UNIFICATION IN 1951 AND IN 1993

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

**delivered as first holder of the Jacques Delors chair
on European and Euregional Studies
on Wednesday, April 28th 1993**

by

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I

The European idea, or, in other words, the movement to outlaw in Western Europe the old scourges of envy, hatred and war and to try to prepare for the future together, constitutes without any doubt the greatest political doctrine of this century. It inaugurated a total new chapter of European history. Other continents looked up at what was happening here, in our area. It encompassed economic as well as political components and has already produced more prosperity than could have been achieved by the obsolete formulae. It was found to be the secret of the best peace policy ever designed in Europe. It paved the way to a fertile future full of great expectations: even if the still incomplete structure has to be completed.

It is my wish to examine today with you the question - if we have remained faithful to the spirit and the will which were characteristic for the pioneers of this thought, and which obstacles still have to be overcome before we can complete the unification.

II

In point of fact the pioneers of the European ideal fostered, following the Second World War, three great expectations. The first one consisted of bringing at last conciliation between Germany and France. For many years these countries had considered each other as hereditary enemies. By doing so differences and conflicts were so exaggerated that they lead regularly to bloody wars. Now, Europe was reduced to ruins. The

Occident, the part of the European continent that was considered as the most civilised part of the world, as the center of science and culture, was totally exhausted by military struggles, for the most part devastated and not capable of starting a reconstruction by its own means.

What was called in that period "the reconciliation" has indeed been a success. Nobody would think today that a new war could break out between the two countries. The "reconciliation" of the postwar period, has been developed into the principle of solidarity. All the member states of the European Community have their part in it. But many are wondering if that solidarity will hold out and if it will remain at the level the founding fathers wanted to achieve.

That they did not limit their ambitions to economic proposals. That already with the Coal and Steel Authority political objects were also pursued was underlined by Chancellor K. Adenauer in the speech delivered on June 13, 1950 in the Bundestag when he said: "I wish to declare explicitly and not only with complete approval of the French Government but also of Jean Monnet, that this project is in the first place of great political significance and not only economic".

Very characteristic for this period was the letter which Jean Monnet sent to Harold MacMillan in July 1950, as an answer to the counter-proposals launched in Strasburg by the prospective prime minister: "The proposals in the Schuman-plan are revolutionary or they don't mean anything. Their fundamental princi-

pal exists in the delegation of sovereignty in limited but decisive domains. In my eyes, a plan which does not start from that principle cannot constitute a useful contribution to the solution of the big problems we have to deal with. Whatever the importance of cooperation between nations, it does not solve anything. What we must seek is a fusion of the interests of the European peoples and not only the maintenance of the balance of these interest".¹

On the 3rd of July of the same year, when the new treaty was being negotiated, Jean Monnet distributed a text to the press in which the following was said: "The withdrawal of a state from the Community, to which it was pledged, should not be allowed, unless with the agreement of all other states, both for the withdrawal and for the conditions under which it could happen.

This rule summarizes how fundamental the transformation is which the French proposal aims to achieve. Through and via coal and steel, it paves the way for a European federation. In a federation no one can unilaterally decide to secede. Equally, there can only be a Community between peoples if they commit themselves without time limits and without looking for a way to return to former positions".

The fact that in December 1991, in the now well know city of Maastricht, all the member states present did

1 Monnet J., *Mémoires*, éd. Fayard, Paris, 1976, p. 374 and p. 382.

not accept the same obligations is clear evidence that not all capitals hold the same views. What will be the future consequences of the opt-outs conceded to Great Britain and the fact that Denmark was allowed to drop essential parts of the new decisions? How will such a union function and how will it be perceived by the outside world? How will it be presented as a united entity, containing as it does such serious differences? And what tendencies will thus be encouraged in new candidates for membership of the Community?

Jacques Delors declared in February of this year that it was not unthinkable to see in the enlargement of the Community a serious risk of the end of it. Does such an opinion not signify that, for a man like the President of the Commission, important differences in the commitments of the member states could become a danger for the survival of the Union?

The principle of subsidiarity has made its unexpected entry in the jargon of the European Community. The Commission, the Council and the European Parliament have drawn up documents trying to define their positions for an application of the principle. But those who were acquainted with it - as you know Thomas of Aquinas wrote about it and one can find it back in some social encyclica - know that in the Christian social doctrine subsidiarity and solidarity are always linked together. Experts on federal constitutions have always adopted the theses that subsidiarity is in fact the working-method within a federal structure. Solidarity is achieved within the whole structure.

Subsidiarity is used to divide competences between the federal authority and the member states.

It is clear for insiders that solidarity in such a framework means also the attachment to or the respect for the whole. It could be compared to what is called in Germany with its federal system "Bundestreue". But such a conception of the total structure is absent in the European Community and in the planned Union. That's the reason that the relationship between subsidiarity and solidarity cannot be drawn in an unequivocal way. The situation is ambiguous. The greatest opponents of European integration invoke on each occasion the principle of subsidiarity. On the other hand the greatest supporters of that integration are all the time paying tribute to that same principle. Both cannot be right.

I should add that application of subsidiarity supposes the possibility of formulating a qualitative judgment. But such an act is always difficult if not impossible in politics. The principle does not offer jurists anchorage. How, in these circumstances, can it be very useful? It was impossible in Maastricht to reach a common view on the final structure of the Union. What was included in the texts has no political or legal significance ("an ever closer union").

Does not this mean that Europe still beats against the wind, without a compass? In other words, that it does not yet know where the home port lies?

III

The second objective consisted in the resolution not to repeat the economic heresies which were so typical for the thirties. You will remember that a stock exchange crisis broke out in the USA in the fall of 1929; it was quickly transformed into a recession and shortly afterwards into an economic crisis. Millions of unemployed persons were seeking jobs in extremely difficult circumstances. This crisis soon afterwards spread to Europe. The systems of social security were then not as developed as they are nowadays.

All the countries that were the victims of that catastrophe thought that they could solve the problem by recurring to purely national measures in the combat against unemployment and the recession in the business cycle. But as they closed their borders for products coming from abroad and manipulated their currencies, hoping to obtain a temporary advantage by doing so, their competitors did the same and thus the crisis was hurried on its way all over the world.

The proposals coming from countries trying, notwithstanding the difficulties, to promote more international cooperation were ignored. The Convention concluded by the Oslo-states e.g. was a victim of that international shortsightedness.

The end of this sad evolution was the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

Now, at this moment Europe is again struck by a serious economic recession. In Spain 19 % of the active

population is jobless, in France 12 % and the figure is going up, in Great Britain the figure of 3 million has been reached and comparisons are made with the prewar situation. I need go no further quoting figures like these.

What is striking in this disturbing situation is the hesitation of the Community (I recognize that the Commission just announced a plan of action) to set up an impressive programme not only because it is necessary but also to prove that, combined with national policies where it is possible, a conclusive answer to a critical situation can be given by the Europeans. In February of this year a so called investiture debate took place in the European Parliament in Strasburg. On this occasion it looked as if Jacques Delors wanted to give vent to his discouragement. Yet, the first information about new proposals coming from the Commission could already be read in the newspapers. But the complete, concrete content was not yet known. On behalf of the Group I belong to it was my duty to infuse new life into his thinking and hopefully change his attitude. The fact that the Commission had accepted such an investiture debate was a token of courage and proved that its idea of the relationship between Parliament and Commission is exemplary and speaks well of its full respect for the parliamentary institution.

I did tell Parliament that we refused to consider the new Commission as a transitional one. It has, as is generally known, only been appointed for a period of two years. On the contrary we expect from it coura-

geous initiatives. We refuse to become the victims of the economic decline. The time had come to draw up an ambitious programme and to overcome, together with the member states, the menacing crisis.

What do we observe, here and there, in the political world, and also in some enterprises? They want in fact to do away with European proposals and actions. They do not have the courage to declare this in such a brutal way and their negative attitude is not yet formulated in a clear language. But they shout: "Europe, Europe? We are also in favour of Europe, but not for the existing one". To which one they want to devote themselves they don't say, because they are the partisans of a purely national policy; they want to put an end to the existing European construction. Consequently, they reject the texts approved in Maastricht. They stand for a policy as it was practiced in the thirties, without any success. If they accept a European initiative, it is only in the form of a cooperation for which unanimity is required. In any case they want to have the right to veto. It could be that their knowledge of economic history is rather weak. But their programmes correspond to the attitudes formed in earlier, unsuccessful, times.

Even in the U.S.A. you can find nowadays a comparable mentality. The Clinton campaign was mainly based on propaganda accepting practically only the American interest. It has been said openly that Europe no longer constituted a priority. At the last legislative elections 110 new members were sent to the US House of Representatives. They were asked on which parlia-

mentary committee they wanted to sit. Only one of the newcomers chose the Foreign Affairs Committee!

What happened in Denmark with the referendum came through as the slogan: "Denmark first". Also in France strange voices could be heard trying to flatter French national feelings and to argue against the European Community. The confusion which has been created in the United Kingdom is well known. The British Government was forced in September 1992 to devalue the pound sterling and to leave the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. In my opinion, this was only a temporary measure because technically speaking only a quick return in order to strengthen that mechanism could contribute to the creation of a monetary union and prevent harmful international speculation against a European currency. Taken separately, no one currency can hold out against these waves of speculation.

Notwithstanding this evidence the British Prime Minister, John Major, declared on New Year's day that his government did not envisage a return to the E.R.M. before 1994. Some observers are still more sceptical and don't even expect a return in that year. The other day the same Prime Minister declared the position of the pound sterling an advantage, encouraging British exports and attracting foreign enterprises thanks to low salaries and social costs. This caused much commotion on the continent, especially in the trade unions. The notion of social dumping made its entry in the jargon of the Community.

The general impression is that Chancellor Kohl was courageous in Maastricht, but, alas, he was also indulgent. He declared recently, during a trip to India, that he would exercise patience till June. If at that moment the approval of Maastricht is not settled, he would advocate a Europe of eleven, or if such should be the case, of ten member states. Even, he added, if certain legal problems still had to be resolved.

This does not mean that there are no difficulties in his own country. Also in Germany voices are heard against European unification. New forces try to dissuade public opinion from the views that there is a necessity to concentrate on European solutions. They are pleading in favour of German ones; especially on Monetary Union. The decisions taken in Maastricht concerning a European currency are under attack. Complete resolution not to repeat prewar economic heresies is now more urgent than ever.

But who will take over the role of the European pioneers?

If Europe should fail on this particularly sensitive point, not much will be left of a European vision of the fundamental problems or of the decision to create a European Union.

IV

The third motive of the Founding Fathers was that Europe must unify to have some weight in world politics.

Out of the Second World War emerged two super-powers compared to which all the other European countries were small or medium sized. Now we have assisted at the collapse of the Marxist-Leninist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe. The reunification of the two Germany's has taken place without armed conflict or bloodshed. Nobody had ever believed this possible during this century. But all these developments have consequences for the European Community and relative power within the Community.

The decision taken in Maastricht, to create a common foreign and security policy must be considered as an especially courageous and significant political act. I regret very much that not all the member states have endorsed and applauded this brave act. But there is also another way of looking at the situation. If we do not achieve such a common foreign and security policy how long will it be before small separate "other" agreements, alliances or ententes are born among the member states? Did we not observe at the conferences and negotiations about ex-Yugoslavia how the old demons were almost visibly present?

Do international analysts not indicate with great certitude who in fact sympathizes with Croatians, Slovenians, Serbs or Moslims? Do we not hear, every day, the question: "what does the United Kingdom support, what does Germany favour, what is the attitude of France, of Greece, of Turkey? Do we not refer, much too often, to what has been arranged in Versailles, St. Germain, Trianon or Sèvres?

The UN Security Council made a first military decision to protect the no-fly zone in Bosnia; after the humanitarian action made possible thanks to the activities of the Blue Helmets of the United Nations this was a decision with possible military consequences.

It was a long time before it was decided to act against a certain way of waging war. In as far as the U.N. decision can contribute to stopping aggression or war like deeds, it was hailed by many.

But is it not humiliating for the European Community that neither the Western European Union nor the Twelve could adopt a common policy? Is it not a shame that an appeal had to be made to NATO, the defense organisation of the West during the Cold War, to execute the plans of the Security Council? In ex-Yugoslavia it is a tragic, murderous, horrible civil war that is going on, characterized by unheard of cruelties, - and this on European territory. NATO was never designed to handle such situations. But Europe, organized Europe, is unable and obviously politically unemancipated to create some semblance of order.

This brings us to the obsessive question: how long will it be, without a common foreign and security policy such as it was announced in Maastricht - but hopefully after 1996 without the necessity to decide unanimously - before, under the pressure of new links of friendship or interests, we will return to the diplomacy of the thirties? As if, in the meantime, we learned nothing.

V

But if we make the structure of a new Europe, based on the existing treaties, plus the amendments from Maastricht - and we improve and complete them at the Intergovernmental Conference in 1996 - Europe could enter into a totally new chapter of its history. In that case this continent will no longer be characterized by a malicious struggle for power and a striving for political, economical or territorial expansion. The member states will obey the same European laws. The rules of the European Union must determine and regulate relations between them. On essential questions they will accept the same common lines of conduct.

With the realization of that concept - some call it the ambitious, audacious and after all, realistic dream - a united, peaceful, prosperous Europe, will be achieved. It can change history.

The new challenges that without any doubt will confront us will at last be tackled in common: ecology, technology, science, immigration, agriculture, third world, unemployment, development, etc. In this way this part of Europe can contribute substantially to the improvement of the global society. In a sense, it can even be an example for other regions in the world. In any case these conditions of unity and cooperation are indispensable if we want to conclude important accords with the U.S.A. and Japan. In this way by putting a floor under world economy and improving understanding a great stability could be reached in World Politics.

But what can be expected if we prove to be incapable of completing this structure? Already nowadays we can hear voices formulating possibilities in case of the failure of Maastricht. It is said, it could happen in the monetary field, that some member states would be forced to seek closer relations to defend themselves against a certain kind of international speculation. This means that a mini-union would be founded without waiting for of all twelve member states. In this respect many observers followed the French-German contacts of last week with very special attention.

Of course the first measure to be taken, if the Twelve desire to stay together, is the readmission of, principally, the British Pound Sterling to the Exchange Rate Mechanism at exchange rates agreed by all as reflecting fundamentals. There is technically no reason why all the currencies concerned should not rejoin the E.R.M. On the contrary, if they do not, the Community really would be in danger of creating a two speed Europe of a kind which is quite incompatible with its normal practice or the future intentions in the Maastricht Treaty. Furthermore, without the discipline of E.R.M. membership, the convergence programmes already agreed, which are indispensable to the credibility of domestic economic management in most if not all the countries concerned, would be fatally undermined. There will doubtless be protests from certain quarters that a hardening of the inner core, as has been suggested, would be humiliating for the "weaker countries". No rhetoric can, however, disguise the fact that there are some stronger economies in the European Community and some that are

weaker, and it is least of all in the interest of the weak that the framework of the E.M.S. should be endangered. A decision by the inner group to strengthen their relations could therefore be seen as both a measure of protection and a further political incentive².

In the field of the internal security in the Community, more and more officials are pleading for a quick application of the Treaty of Schengen, which contains security measures, if Maastricht is not ratified by all member states.

It was on 19th June 1990 that the Agreement for the execution of the Accord concluded between the Benelux Economic Union, the Federal Republic of Germany, and the French Republic, concerning the progressive abolition of the control at the common borders, was signed. Other member states joined the first group later on.

The texts of Maastricht contain indeed non-detailed provisions to guarantee the internal security in the unified market. It concerns questions in the domain of justice and the interior, such as right of asylum, the crossing of external borders, immigration, drugs, fraud, and cooperation between police forces, justice and customs.

It is not excluded that for external security a current of opinion carries the idea through that the approval

2 Ludlow P.W. & D. Gros, *The European Union and the Future of Europe*, CEPS, Brussels, 1992

of Maastricht is taking too long a time. So Schengen could be a much quicker solution. It is said that the W.E.U. does not dispose of a military instrument for the external security. Since it has been declared that the French-German military agreement is not contrary to the W.E.U. or NATO, it is no unthinkable that some other member states may join this agreement and help to create an instrument for the external security of Europe. It has been announced that the Netherlands has concluded a convention with Germany; and Belgium has already sent an observer to the French-German headquarters.

Such an evolution, in these three fields, would signify that the Europe of the Twelve is not progressing as such, but that solutions are being sought in each domain separately.

This raises the question how in that case the enlargement of the Community must be organised. Will certain candidates, if they wish to do so, be allowed to enter these new constructions, or do they have to wait for better times?

In any case, their entry to the Community, if Maastricht is approved, makes large-scale institutional reforms necessary. I evoke some of them: the delicate problem of the use of languages, the number of members in the European Parliament and of the Commission.

But what would happen if Maastricht fails and no other solutions are brought about?

Of course, in that case the Community remains at the existing level of the development based on the approved treaties. But it is to be feared, that in such an hypothesis, the decision making will almost inevitably take place more and more at a national level. This implies that more conflicts and oppositions will arise, of which nobody can predict how solutions can be found. Besides, in several member states, new tendencies are recommending a return to national solutions and the abandonment of Community ones.

With these elements it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to draw up a new improved chapter; in fact it will be a going back to obsolete conceptions, to inappropriate, or even dangerous positions. I will make it clear with an historic comparison: also for this return, it concerns an attitude as inefficient as it was in the thirties.

We may not forget that a failure of Maastricht, whatever we think of its content, and the impotence to accept other, less comprehensive, but still pragmatic makeshift contrivances, will have political and psychological backlashes. This lack of determination would be interpreted as the end of the movement towards more European unification and even as the incapacity of the European Community to solve its problems and to develop a vision on the future.

I am convinced that a failure of Maastricht would not be limited to this new phase of the European evolution. All things considered, Maastricht is the logic, or the consequence, of the internal market. Those who

are in favour of this achievement must accept the economic and monetary union, the common foreign policy and the internal security measures. If Maastricht is rejected, the internal market will never deliver what we expect from it.

Of course, even if Maastricht comes into being, a wrong application of the principle of subsidiarity can burden the future. More and more Europeans think that if the resentments of many Europeans against a certain evolution of the European Community are to be met, the European Union needs a constitution. Especially in the light of enlargement a systematic reapproval and restatement of the system becomes useful if not necessary.

The Treaty of Maastricht envisages a new Intergovernmental Conference in 1996. It defines the purpose of the latter as following: "A conference of representatives of the governments of the member states shall be convened in 1996 to examine those provisions of this Treaty for which revision is provided in accordance with the objectives set out in articles A and B".

It has been said that the second intergovernmental conference in Maastricht on Political Union suffered from the lack of good preparatory work. Such work had been carried out for Economic and Monetary Union. It was also clear that the members of the European Council were not acquainted with ideas such as federalism, confederation, intergovernmentalism or the conditions of their success or the reasons

of their failure. For the monetary problems they could listen to the advice of the Central Bank Governors and not suspect experts. For the institutional problems they were lost by a lack of knowledge or disputes fed by slogans.

To avoid these pitfalls, it is urged that the European Council should nominate a committee to draft a constitution of the Union, which can be taken as the basis for negotiation. Its members may not forget that there exist already two drafts, drawn up by the European Parliament, the first bears the name of the Italian, Altiero Spinelli, and the second of the Belgian, Fernand Herman. The European Parliament decided two years ago to prepare a new updated version taking into account the recent evolution and the new decisions from the various Summit meetings. The first rapporteur was the Italian, Emilio Colombo. When he returned to the Italian Government, his task was taken over by the Spaniard, Marcelino Oreja. He recently submitted the first drafts to the Institutional Committee.

VI

For the famous man in the street, this does probably not look very dramatic. He is rightly concerned with the growing unemployment and is probably now and then vexed by some detailed aspects of an ambitious enterprise. But if our efforts fail, does that mean the bankruptcy of a generation and its effort to make society a little bit better and hopeful? If this happens the greatest political idea of the second half of this

century would be a shipwrecked, lustreless and obsolete.

I have had the pleasure and the honour in my life to have known and debated with Jean Monnet. He liked to recount that his mother was an intelligent woman who was never immediately inspired by great proposals. She always reacted with the question: "How will they be achieved and what shall be the result?". The son inherited something from that sceptical self-defense. But when that courageous little Frenchman with his fantastic character and dynamism was convinced that something had to be done nobody could stop him. Then, he convinced ministers and governments, and he produced results.

We must pay tribute to him for his exceptional efforts in shaping the European idea. But this work is not completed. We were entering the decisive phase. Monnet's philosophy was that when facing a crisis only two attitudes were possible: either a passive one, a kind of resignation, or the decision to develop a new action.

If with a clear vision, of which he outlined the main characteristics, we try to achieve what has been agreed, start a new and hopeful chapter in Europe's history, we give a great sense to our own life.

When the Treaty of Rome was approved, my compatriot P.H. Spaak declared that "this time, the men from the West have not lacked daring and have not taken action too late". Indeed, they created a new and successful Community.

Jacques Delors likes to quote these words with much satisfaction and pride because he belongs to the leadership of the movement working for the completion of the building started in 1951 and continued in 1957.

But, when he delivered his great speech in February 1993, describing the coming events, he added somewhat precariously: "1992 is no longer an objective, it is already a reference in Europe, which if we don't take care, could become once more the continent of all the alarms".

Indeed, the responsibility of our generation is impressive. Because we must give an answer to the question: "what will be made out of Europe?".